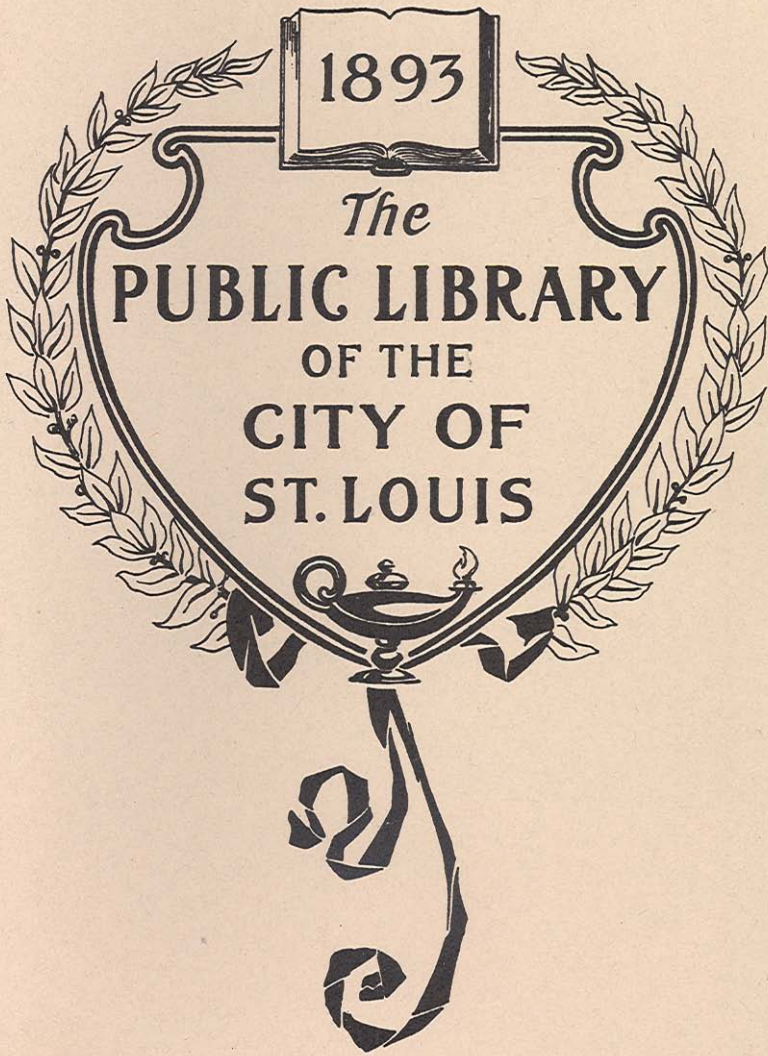




1893

The
PUBLIC LIBRARY
OF THE
CITY OF
ST. LOUIS

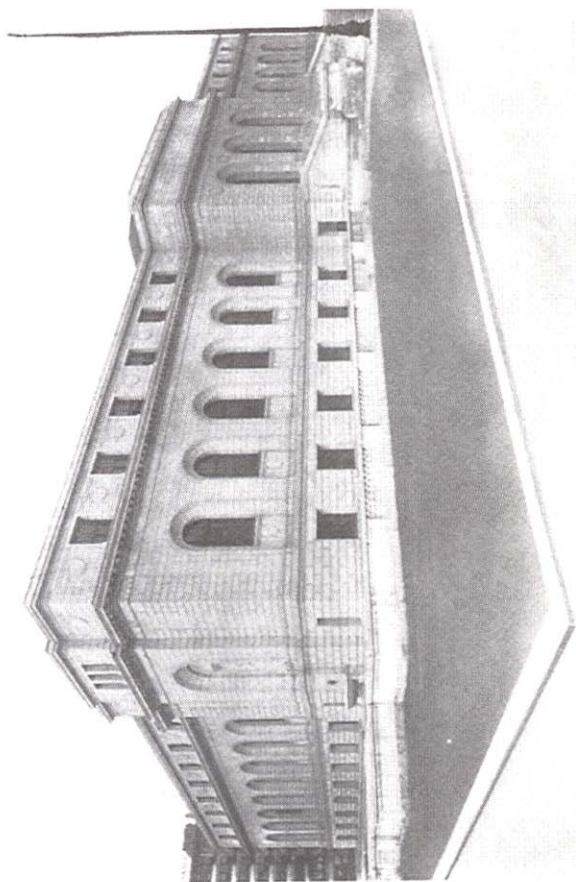
The Central Library Building *of the* Public Library *of the* City of St. Louis



Illustrations on pages 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 24, 26, 28,
30, 32, 38, 40 and 42 are from photographs by
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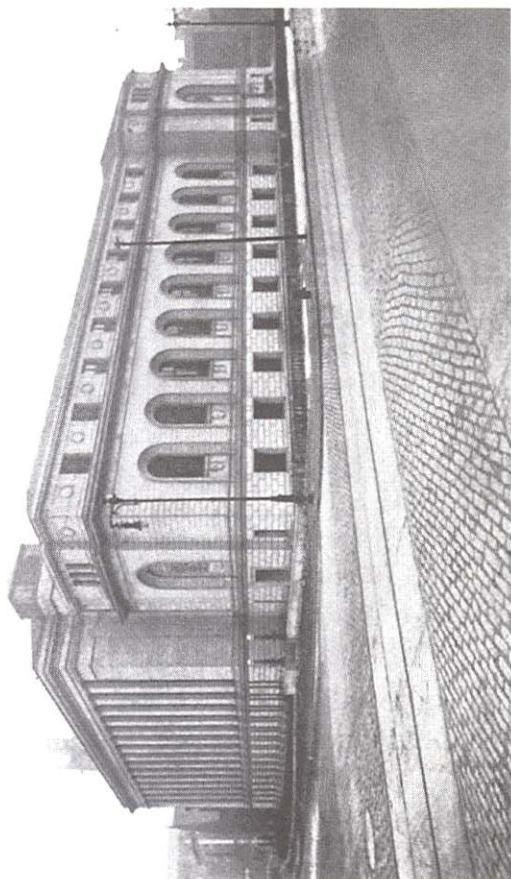


Central Library Building of the Public Library of the City of St. Louis

Site and Building



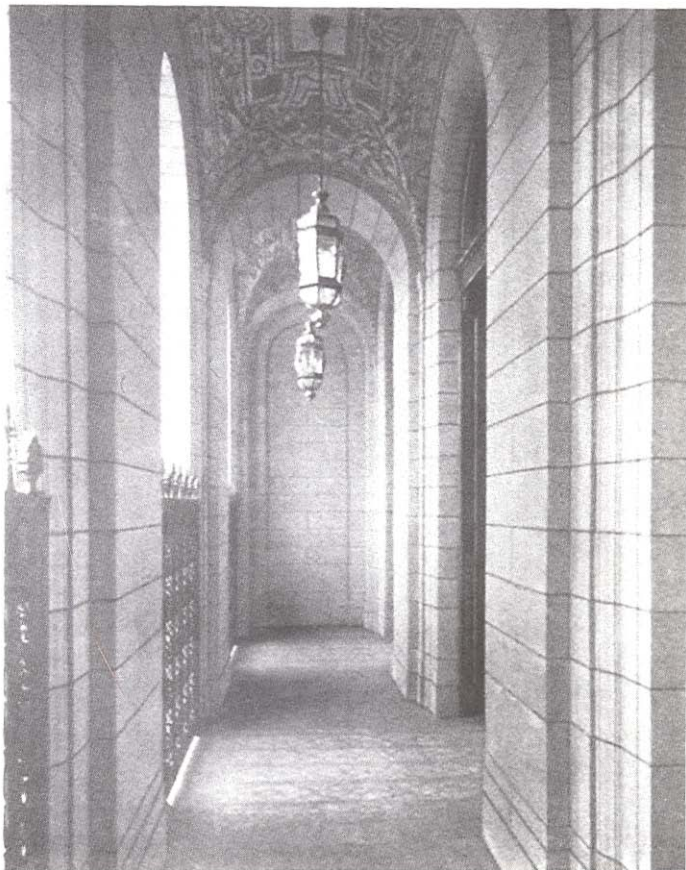
THE site occupies the southern half of the space formerly known as Missouri Park, bounded by Olive, St. Charles, Thirteenth and Fourteenth streets. The part on which the library stands was purchased by the city from the Lucas family in 1854 and the rest was a gift from the same family. The whole tract was occupied by an exposition building from 1884 until the structure was demolished in 1907 to make room for the Library. The library building was placed on the southern half because the city authorities desired to extend Locust street through the park. The northern half of the space has been laid out by the city as a sunken garden. The building is placed back from the streets so that it is surrounded by an ample open space, which is adorned with balustraded walls and terraces, forming a suitable setting for the structure. The spaces between the terrace walls and the streets are turfed and planted with shrubbery so as to give an agreeable foreground. Broad granite steps



West Side, Showing Stack Front

and walks lead up to the building from each street, and these are adorned and lighted by bronze candelabra, masts and places for sculpture, all of which add materially to the effectiveness of the design and enhance the "scale" of the building. The cost of the building in round numbers was \$1,500,000, of which about \$65,000 was for furniture and \$30,000 was for lighting fixtures, including bronze and carved marble standards, etc. The sum of \$500,000 was given by Andrew Carnegie, and the remainder was taken from funds of the library. The site, contributed by the City of St. Louis, represents a value of perhaps a million more.

The architect is Cass Gilbert, N. A., F. A. I. A., of New York. He was chosen as the result of a competition in which eight firms of architects took part, and the plans for which were formulated by Prof. F. A. Mann, of Washington University, as consulting architect. The jury of award consisted of three architects chosen by the competitors—Messrs. Walter Cook of New York, Frank Miles Day of Philadelphia and Philip Sawyer of New York, one librarian, Mr. Edwin H. Anderson, Director of the New York State Library, and Mr. John F. Lee, of St. Louis, Chairman of the Building Committee.



Main Vestibule

Construction

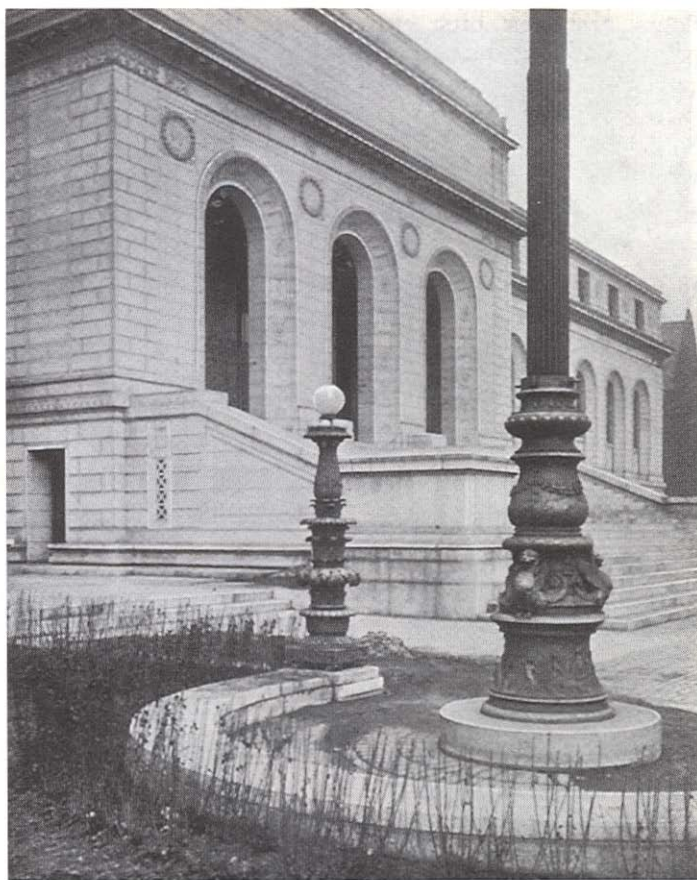


THE soil upon which the library is built is hard yellow clay, to reach which it was necessary on some portions of the site to go down about eighteen feet below the basement-floor level. The easterly edge of the building site was formerly at or near the center of an old creek or run. The enormous weight of the walls and floors is distributed over the soil by means of steel grillage beams, keeping the weight per square foot on the soil to within two tons. All walls that come in contact with the earth on one side are of concrete; all other walls are of brick, or of brick and granite combined. The exterior walls and terraces are of cut granite from Mt. Waldo, Maine. The floors and roof are supported by steel construction independent of the walls, which are self-supporting from the foundation. Provision against dampness in the building is made by coating the exterior walls below the ground level with from two to six thicknesses of tar and felt in alternate layers. This dampproofing course extends underneath all wall footings and all



Periodical Room

floors, trenches, pits, etc., making the interior of the whole building inaccessible to moisture from outside. The floor construction consists of steel beams between which is a filling of hollow terra cotta blocks covered with three to five inches of concrete, over which the final surface, whether of wood, marble, terrazzo or cork, is laid. Wood, where used, is nailed to wooden strips embedded in the concrete. The roof is of reinforced concrete construction, instead of the hollow tile used in floors. Wood strips are bedded in the surface, which is covered with two layers of tar-paper and with the necessary strips of wood running both horizontally and down the slope of the roof for the support of special roof tiling, which is of burnt clay, colored in varying shades of green in the burning. The interior wood finish is quartered oak throughout. The oak, after being thoroughly dried, is treated in a closed chamber with fumes of anhydrous ammonia for twenty-four to thirty-six hours. This gives the wood a richer texture. It is then treated with a special preparation of the nature of an oil or stain. The ornamental plaster ceilings were made at the building. All irregular forms involving curves, foliations, etc., were cast in molds made of glue; after being thoroughly dried, they were then



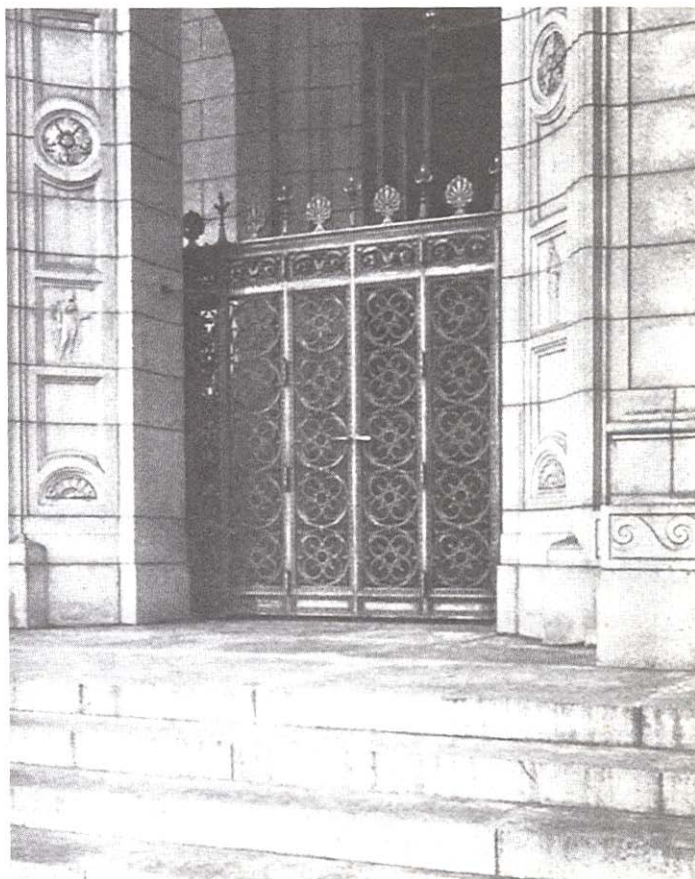
Bronze Base of Flagstaff at Entrance

attached in their respective places to the iron or tile construction overhead. Most of the straight cornices were molded in place. Practically all of the carving of both marble and granite was done with pneumatic tools operated by an air compressor installed temporarily in the building. Some of the carving required very fine pointed tools in the execution of the design, the points of some of these being not more than one-eighth of an inch wide and of razor-edge sharpness.

Description of Exterior



THE building is in the style of the early Italian Renaissance, with three stories, ground floor, main floor and second floor, and basement. The building consists of five pavilions, one on each of the four bounding streets and one, invisible from the outside, in the center of the rectangular space thus formed. The resulting courtyard is thus roughly annular and surrounds the central pavilion, access to which from the outer pavilions is by passageways built as bridges over the court. The front or Olive street pavilion contains the entrance and stair halls, and the rear or Locust street pavilion the stack room, for



Grille in Main Entrance

the storage of books. The central pavilion contains the large delivery hall, which is two stories high.

Seen from outside, the building, surrounded by its terraces and approached by a flight of steps leading from Olive street up to the entrance on the main floor, shows a ground story with square windows, a high main story with arched windows, and an attic or second story with square windows like those in the basement. The material is Maine granite and the whole is surmounted with ridged tile roof on the four outer pavilions and a flat roof with a parapet over the central pavilion. There is a main entrance on Olive street consisting of three large arches at the head of the outer stairway, and a staff entrance on the ground floor immediately underneath, reached by two doors at the sides of this stairway. There are in addition four other ground-floor entrances, one each on Thirteenth and Fourteenth streets and two on Locust street.

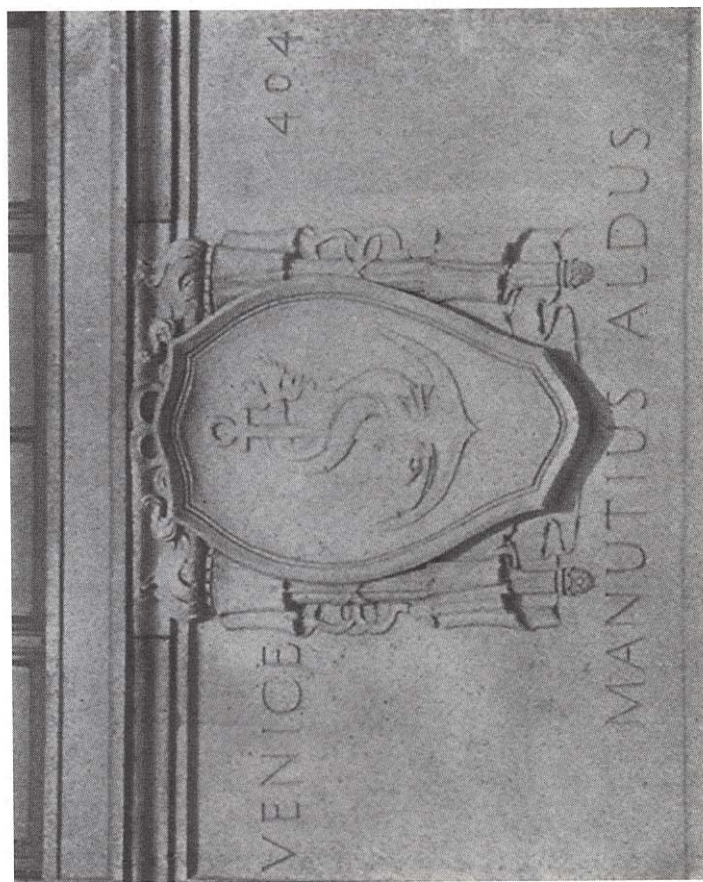
Carving and inscriptions on the outside of the building are as follows: Between the windows of the upper story on three sides are circular medallions, of which sixteen, running across the front, and four on the ends of the front pavilion are carved, twelve with the signs of the zodiac and the other eight respectively with the



Muse with a Lyre—Relief Sculpture at Front Door

seals of the city and library, heads of Minerva and Janus, Pegasus, an hour-glass, an owl and an eagle. Alternating with the arches of the entrance are large medallion portraits of Homer, Dante, Virgil and Shakespeare, in this order, from left to right; and on the beveled jambs of the three arches are small panels on which are carved, in relief, figures of the nine muses and the three graces. On the stone screens occupying the lower part of the arched main-floor windows are thirty shields in high relief bearing devices representing thirty-six printers identified with the history of their art. On each side of the shields are carved their names, dates and the location of their presses. These are as follows:

	Printer	Date	Place
1	Johann Gutenberg.....	1450.....	Mainz
	Fust and Schoeffer.....	1457.....	Mainz
2	Erhardus Ratdolt.....	1476.....	Venice and Augsburg
3	William Caxton.....	1477.....	Westminster and Bruges
	Wynken DeWorde		
4	Unknown Printer.....	1480.....	Saint Albans
5	Johann Gruninger.....	1483.....	Strasbourg
6	Antoine Verard.....	1480.....	Paris
7	Simon Vostre.....	1488.....	Paris
8	Philippe Pigouchet.....	1484.....	Paris
9	Jehan Petit.....	1492.....	Paris
10	Manutius Aldus.....	1494.....	Venice
11	Johann Froben.....	1491.....	Basle
12	Thielman Kerver.....	1497.....	Paris



Printer's Mark on Decorative Shield

	Printer	Date	Place
13	Julian Notary.....	1498.....	Westminster
14	Martin Schott.....	1481.....	Strasburg
15	Richard Pynson.....	1493.....	London
16	John Scolar.....	1512.....	Oxford
17	Christophorus Froschover.....	1523.....	Zurich
18	Robert Estienne.....	1525.....	Paris and Geneva
19	Richard Grafton.....	1537.....	London
20	Christophe Plantin.....	1550.....	Antwerp
21	Henry Bynneman.....	1567.....	London
22	William Jaggard.....	1591.....	London
23	Isaac Elzevir.....	1618.....	Leyden
24	Stephen Daye.....	1639.....	Cambridge, Mass.
	Samuel Green		
25	William Bradford.....	1686.....	Philadelphia
	John Peter Zenger.....	1733.....	New York
26	Benjamin Franklin.....	1730.....	Philadelphia
	Christopher Saur.....	1738.....	Germantown
27	Foulis Press.....	1740.....	Glasgow
28	John Baskerville.....	1757.....	Birmingham
29	Chiswick Press.....	1811.....	London
30	William Morris.....	1890.....	London

In most cases these printers used trade-marks or devices of some sort to mark their work. These are carved on the shields. Where no such marks were used, the shield bears a device from the arms of the city where the press was situated, as Philadelphia for Benjamin Franklin, New York for Wm. Bradford, and Cambridge, Mass., for Stephen Daye.

On the cornice are carved the names of eminent writ-

ers, as follows: On the front from left to right, Moliere, Macaulay, Scott, Hawthorne, Addison, Chaucer, Goethe, Milton, Racine, Irving, Darwin, Cervantes, Balzac, Emerson, Thackeray; on the Thirteenth street side, Schiller, Goldsmith, Byron, Bacon, Kant, Burke, Franklin, Moore, Ruskin, Carlyle; on the Fourteenth street side, Burns, Mommsen, Hugo, Lessing, Clemens, Poe, Dickens, Tennyson, George Eliot, Longfellow; and on the Locust street side, the Brownings and the Brontës.

Four of the arched spaces which elsewhere are occupied by windows are filled with variegated Italian marble, which in places is carved with ornamental designs and which also serves as background for inscriptions formed of attached bronze lettering. Two of these spaces are at the east and west ends of the front pavilion, and two at the rear on the ends of the east and west pavilions. Directly in front of the former pair are granite fountains, forming part of the detail of the terraces.

Inscriptions



HERE are on the outside of the building seven inscriptions, as follows: On the pediment in front:

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF
ST. LOUIS

RECORDED THOUGHT IS OUR CHIEF HERITAGE
FROM THE PAST, THE MOST LASTING
LEGACY WE CAN LEAVE TO THE FUTURE.
BOOKS ARE THE MOST ENDURING MONUMENT
OF MAN'S ACHIEVEMENTS. ONLY THROUGH
BOOKS CAN CIVILIZATION BECOME
CUMULATIVE.

FREDERICK M. CRUNDEN.

On the marble panel on Fourteenth street, next to Olive street:

A GOOD BOOK
IS THE PRECIOUS
LIFE-BLOOD OF A
MASTER SPIRIT
EMBALMED AND
TREASURED UP ON
PURPOSE TO A
LIFE BEYOND LIFE.

JOHN MILTON.

Immediately below this, over the fountain:

IN BOOKS LIES THE SOUL
OF THE WHOLE PAST TIME:
THE ARTICULATE AUDIBLE
VOICE OF THE PAST.

THOMAS CARLYLE.

On the marble panel on Thirteenth street, next to Olive street:

THE PUBLIC
SCHOOL AND
THE LIBRARY
RENDER POSSIBLE
A PERPETUAL
EDUCATION IN
THE COMMUNITY.

WILLIAM T. HARRIS.

Immediately below this, over the fountain:

THE LOVE OF LEARNING, THE
SEQUESTERED NOOKS,
AND ALL THE SWEET SERENITY
OF BOOKS. HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

On the marble panel on Locust street, next to Fourteenth street:

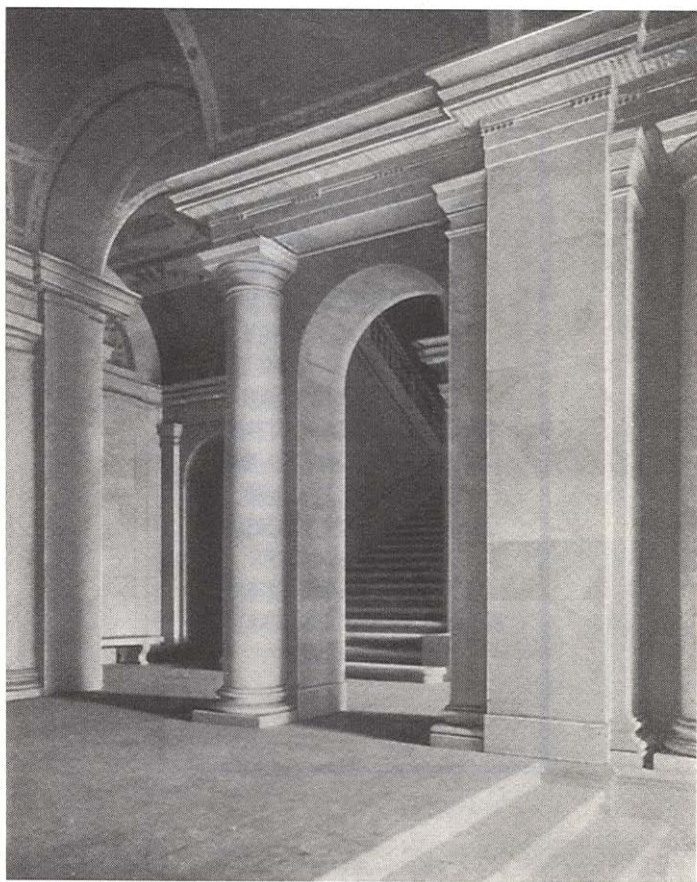
I CHOOSE FREE
LIBRARIES AS THE
BEST AGENCIES
FOR IMPROVING
THE MASSES OF
THE PEOPLE
BECAUSE THEY
ONLY HELP THOSE
WHO HELP THEM-
SELVES. THEY
NEVER PAUPERIZE.
A TASTE FOR
READING DRIVES
OUT LOWER TASTES.

ANDREW CARNEGIE.

On the marble panel on Locust street, next to Thirteenth street:

WHEN I ENTER A
LIBRARY I FEEL
AS IF ALMOST
THE DEAD WERE
PRESENT, AND
I KNOW IF I PUT
QUESTIONS TO
THESE BOOKS THEY
WILL ANSWER ME
WITH ALL THE
FAITHFULNESS
AND FULLNESS
WHICH HAS BEEN
LEFT IN THEM.

JOHN BRIGHT.

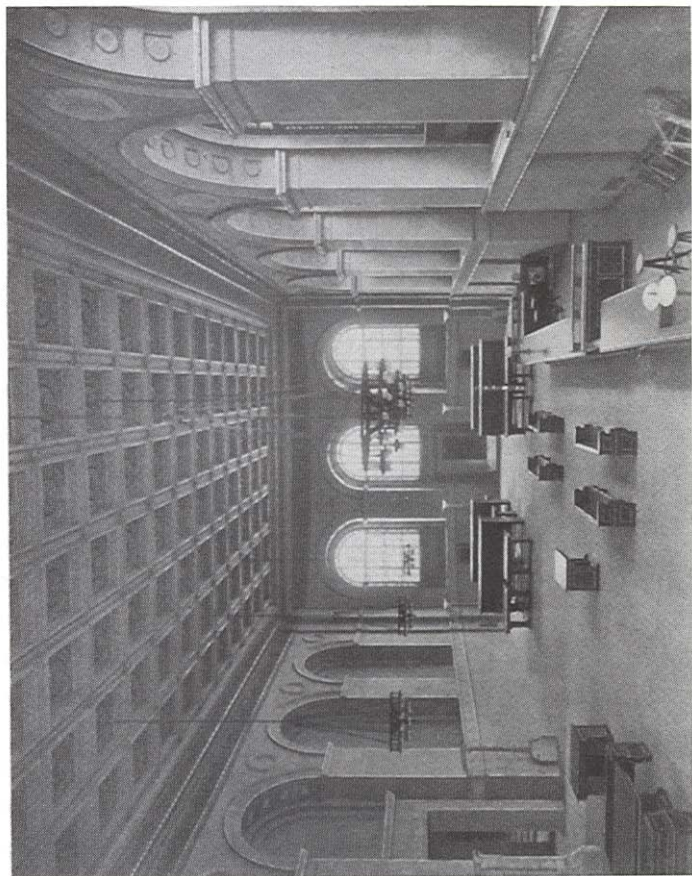


Stair Hall

Description of Interior

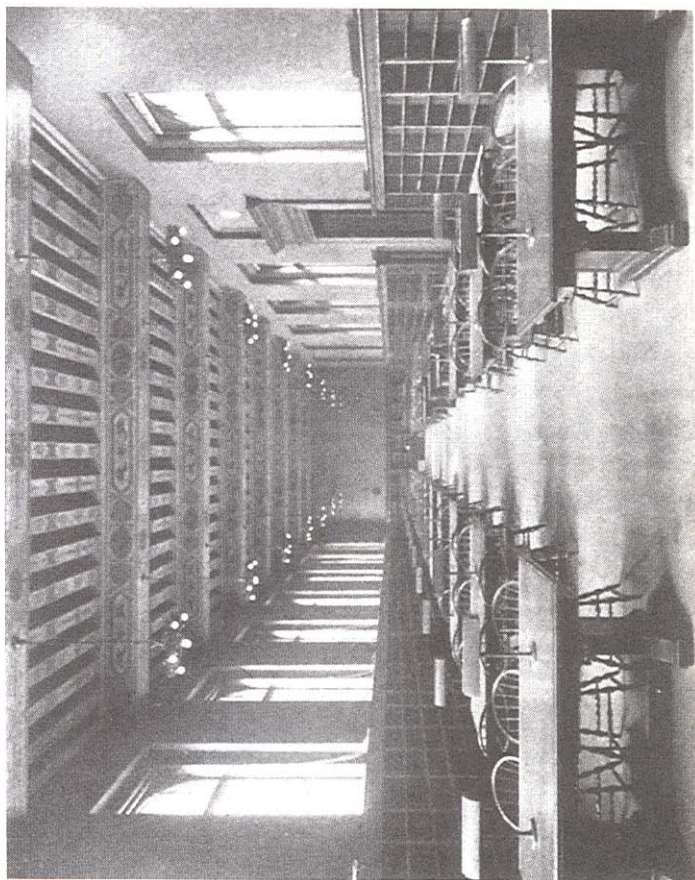


N passing through the bronze-grilled gates of the front entrance the visitor finds himself in an outer lobby with vaulted mosaic ceiling. Beyond this is a large rectangular entrance hall with marble walls, columns and floor, and with vaulted ceiling decorated in color. Directly out of this open the art room on the left and the periodical reading-room on the right, through doorways protected by folding bronze grilles of much beauty and flanked by high carved light standards of Italian marble, bearing aloft basins of alabaster, through which passes the light from clusters of unseen electric lamps. The general lighting of this impressive hall is from concealed "linolite" lamps, arranged just below the spring of the vaulting so as to throw their rays upward against the decorated ceiling. Beyond this hall, and forming practically a part of it, although a few steps above it, is the stair hall, from which broad marble flights lead right and left to the floor above. On landings half-way up are large arched windows of leaded ornamental glass.



Delivery Hall

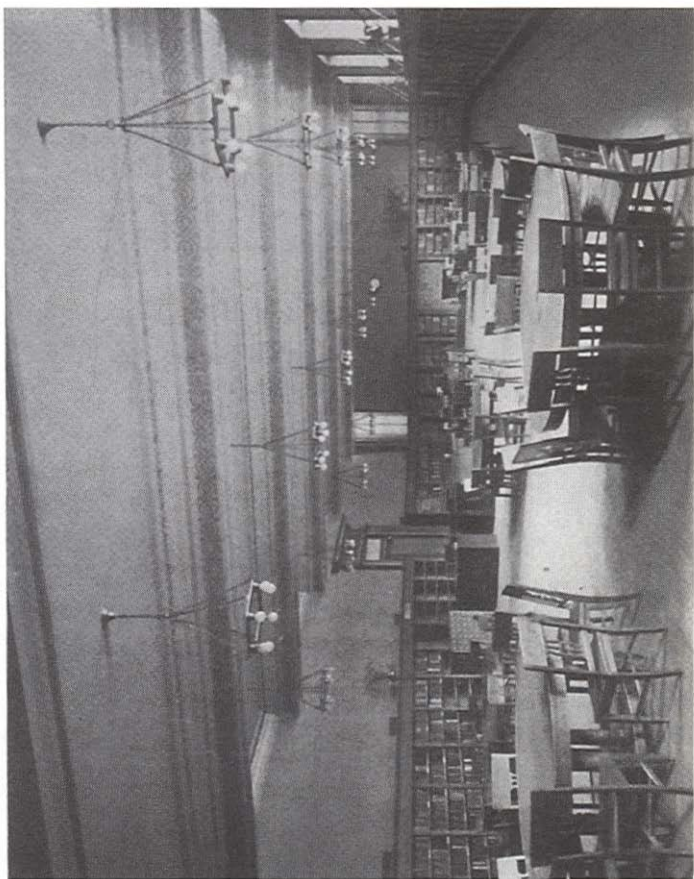
Passing through a carved marble doorway the visitor finds himself in the largest and finest room in the library, the Delivery Hall, occupying the full length and width of the central pavilion, and extending upward to the roof of that pavilion, two stories above. The walls and floor of this room are of Tennessee marble of the same color as that in the entrance and stair halls—a soft pink gray, almost a dove color, which is hone-finished, not polished, thus avoiding the glitter so disturbing in a color scheme. The high arched windows are of translucent cathedral glass, slightly yellowish in tone. The ceiling is of molded plaster, decorated in dull gold, picked out with color. Directly in front are the delivery and registration counters, and behind them are offices, between the delivery room and the stack room, occupied by the Assistant Librarian, the Record Department, the Issue Department and the Registration Department. The room also communicates by means of short passages to right and left, with the Open Shelf Room in the east pavilion and the Reference Room in the west pavilion. The Delivery Hall contains, in its western half, the public card catalogue, and in the eastern half, settees for those who are waiting for books, as well as public bulletin boards.



Reference Room

The Reference Room on the left, occupying the west pavilion, has wall shelves for 10,000 books and communicates directly with the stack, where the greater part of the collection is shelved. The floor is occupied entirely with tables and charts for workers. This, and the similar room opposite, have the character and charm of the great hall in some old French or Italian palace. The wall surfaces are kept plain, as they may some day be decorated with pictures, tapestries or objects of art. Opening from this room is the Art Room, also accessible directly from the entrance hall and occupying the west end of the front pavilion. Here are shelved, along the walls, the library's valuable collection of books on the fine-arts. No furniture is fixed to the floor, which can be entirely cleared when desired, so that the room may be used for receptions or exhibitions. There are large wing frames for the display of prints.

On the other side of the Delivery Hall is the Open Shelf Room, occupying the east pavilion and containing about 25,000 volumes, entirely free of access to the public, as well as tables and chairs to accommodate readers. Adjoining it, at the east end of the front pavilion, is the Periodical Reading Room, which will be entered directly from the entrance hall. The walls are covered with peri-

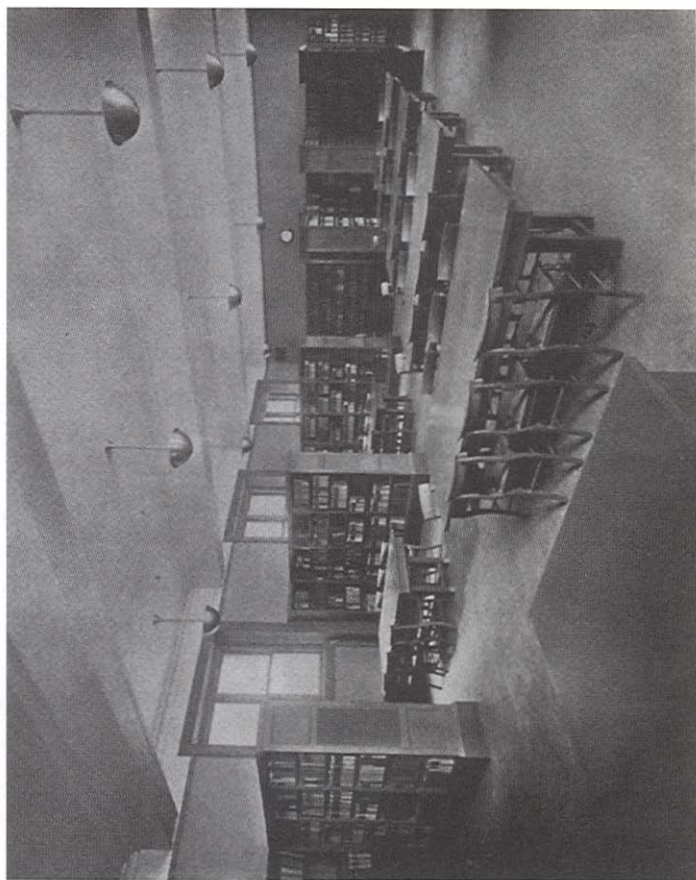


Children's Room

odical cases and shelving and the floor is entirely occupied by tables and chairs for readers.

The rooms hitherto described are all on the main floor. Below, on the ground floor, reached by stairways from the stair hall or through the ground floor entrance previously described, are the following rooms, some of which are for the use of the staff, while others are public. The floor is traversed by two corridors at right angles, one connecting the entrances at the ends of the front pavilion, while the other runs from the staff entrance in front through the central pavilion and the stack-room. These cross in a hall-way just under the stair hall.

Occupying the east end of the front pavilion, on this floor, is the Children's Room, with its stock of books on wall shelving and its tables and chairs for reading. Those who use it enter through the door on Thirteenth street, and there is no contact at any point between them and the adult users. At the east end of the room is a fireplace surrounded by picture tiles and with an oaken mantel. The ceiling-beams bear the titles of children's books as part of the decoration. Across the corridor and in the east pavilion are offices for the Supervisor of Children's Work, for the Chief of the Stations Department

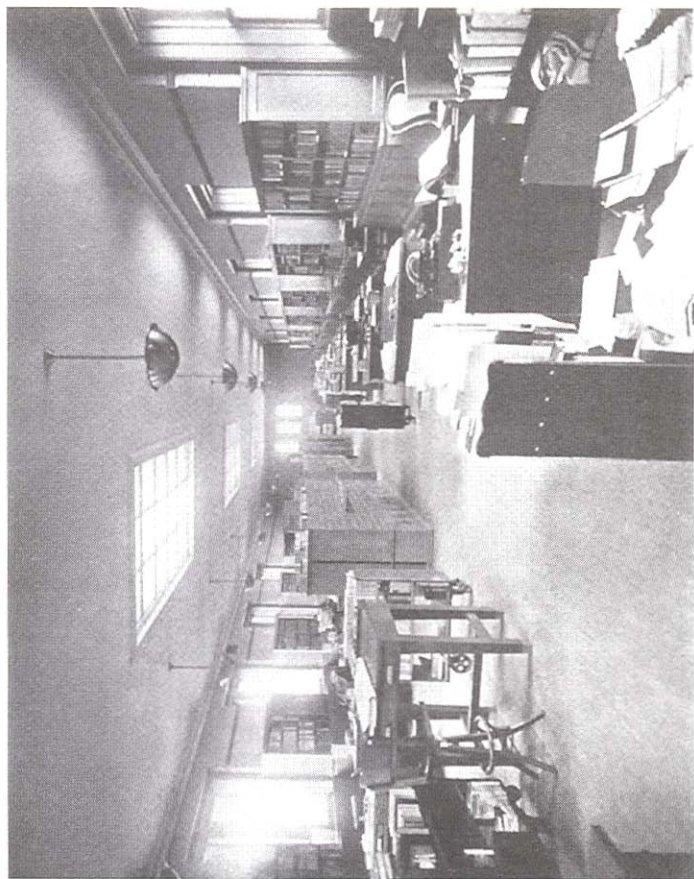


Applied Science Room

and for the Chief of the Traveling Libraries Department and her assistants. The remainder of the wing, on this floor, is devoted to the distribution of books to the library's fifty delivery stations. Tables and large bins are provided to facilitate this work, and lifts connect with the shipping room immediately below.

At the west end of the pavilion, on this floor, are the commodious Staff Lunch Room, with separate kitchen and pantry, and the Bindery. In the west pavilion are the Newspaper-Room, with standing desks for much-used papers, and the Applied-Science Room, with its separate entrance direct from Locust street and its convenient connection with the book-stack and with the Reference Department just above, in conjunction with which it is largely used. In the room itself are kept several thousand of the most-used volumes on technology, the industrial arts, engineering, etc. Adjoining are a small office and a private study-room.

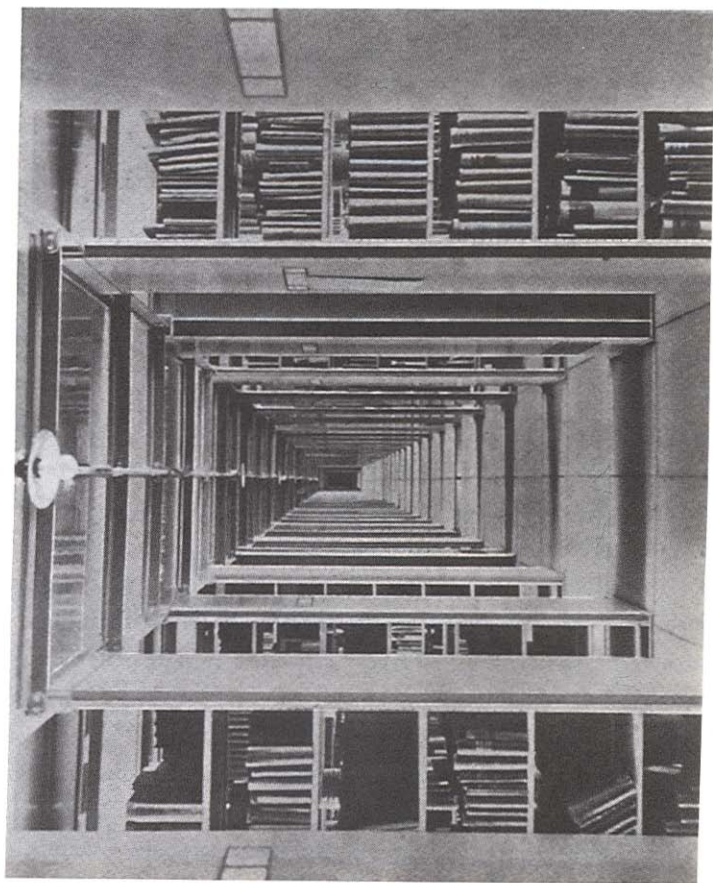
Adjoining the central hallway are the large men's and women's locker rooms, for the staff, conveniently near the staff entrance, and the public toilets. In the central pavilion are rooms for storage, and for janitors' use, story-hour and club rooms, a rest-room for staff use, located here on account of quiet, and a photographic



suite, including a dark-room with individual lockers, and rooms for printing and enlarging, both by artificial and natural light.

On the second or upper floor, accessible to the public by stairways from the main stair hall, there is, immediately in front and just behind the pediment over the entrance, a staff assembly room, lighted by skylight. It has a portable platform for speakers and movable lecture-room chairs. Just to the west are the quarters for the library training-class, consisting of a pleasant class-room, with blackboard and desks, a private office for the inspector and a locker room. On the other side is an administrative suite of three rooms, including the Board Room, the Auditor's office and the Librarian's office. The whole of the east wing, on this floor, is occupied by the Cataloguing Room, having in it shelving space for books in preparation, the whole of the official card catalogue, with the "repertory" catalogues of other libraries, and desks for the cataloguers. Adjoining is a private office for the Chief Cataloguer and also a fire-proof vault, half of which opens toward the administrative suite and is used by the Finance Department and half toward the cataloguing room for the storage of records.

In the west wing is a suite of five connecting rooms.

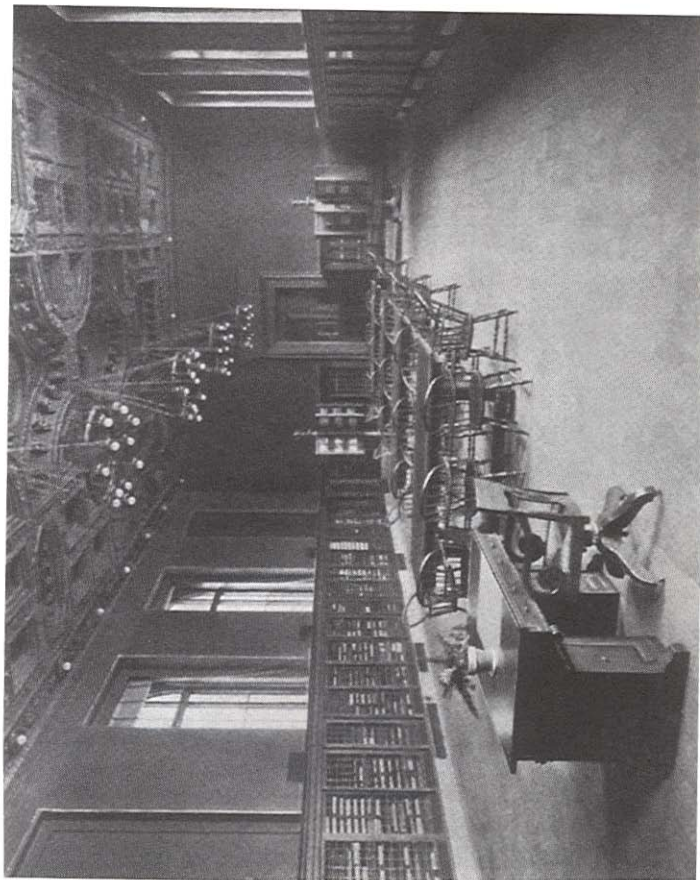


Stack Room, Third Deck, Central Aisle

Two large ones at the ends are the pamphlet room toward the south, fitted with vertical file cases for the storage of pamphlets, and the map-room at north, with shallow drawers of various sizes for keeping maps flat, without rolling. In one of the three intervening rooms the German patents are kept; the others are available for students or investigators.

The whole of the rear or north pavilion, on all floors, is devoted to the storage of books, and for this purpose it is entirely filled with a structure built of steel and glass. From the ground floor up there are seven stack floors, and an extra one below this in the cellar. These floors are so close together that there is no waste space, and books on the top shelf close to the ceiling can be easily reached by a person standing on the floor. They are connected by stairways and elevators at each end and by stairs in the center; and there are also vertical book-lifts. There are no horizontal book-conveyers in the building, the space being so conveniently arranged that books may be easily taken by messenger from the lift on any stack-floor to the department or room where they may be needed.

Underneath the whole of the ground floor there is a basement whose floor is on a level with the paved bot-



Art Room

tom of the annular courtyard. This is accessible from the street by an inclined driveway on the Thirteenth street side, passing under the east pavilion into the courtyard. A shipping and receiving room opens directly into the yard and communicates with the rooms above by lifts. Here also are rooms for storage and much space connected with the heating and ventilating plant, occupied by exhaust fans, motors, washers, plenum-chambers, etc. The boilers are in a space under the central pavilion whose floor is nine feet lower than that of the basement. This space contains also a dynamo-room for the installation of a separate lighting plant for the building, if such should ever be desired.

Decorations



THE decorations of the building are intended to reflect the spirit of early Italian architecture, and in pursuance of this intention the ceiling of the Art Room has been adapted from the church of La Badia in Florence, Italy, built by Arnolfo di Cambio in 1285, and restored by Segaloni in 1625.

For the Periodical Room, a study was made of the



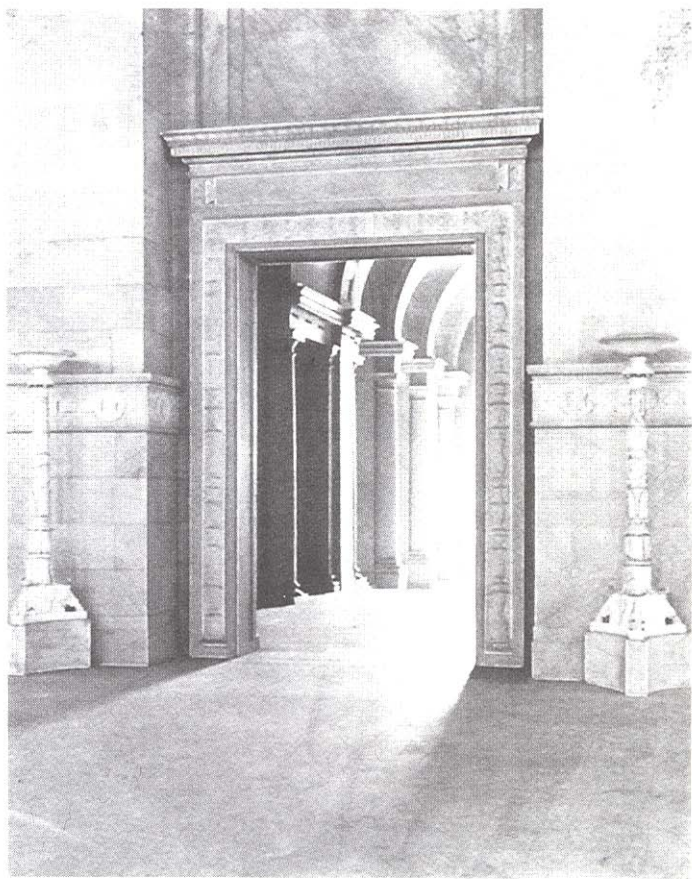
Open Shelf Room

ceiling of the Biblioteca Laurenziana, or Laurentian Library, in Florence, Italy, founded by the Medici, and built from designs by Michael Angelo, between 1524 and 1571.

In their proportions, the originals differ largely from the rooms in the Library, and consequently the detail has been considerably modified; yet the general effect of the ceilings recalls their prototypes, and the painter has endeavored to suggest the mellow tone of the old ceilings in his decorations.

The Reference and Open Shelf Rooms have been designed in accordance with the Renaissance type of heavily beamed ceilings, but no specific example has been followed. Such ceilings are not uncommon in both Italy and France, and numerous examples of similar treatment are found in Europe and in this country. The painted decoration of these ceilings is not copied from any other, yet many of the elements of the designs are found in old Italian and French work, the latter executed under Italian influence.

In the Entrance Hall the color of the vaulted ceiling is based upon that of the marble beneath it. Gray blue and violet tones are carried through the design, in order that the marble shall retain its warm tones by contrast.

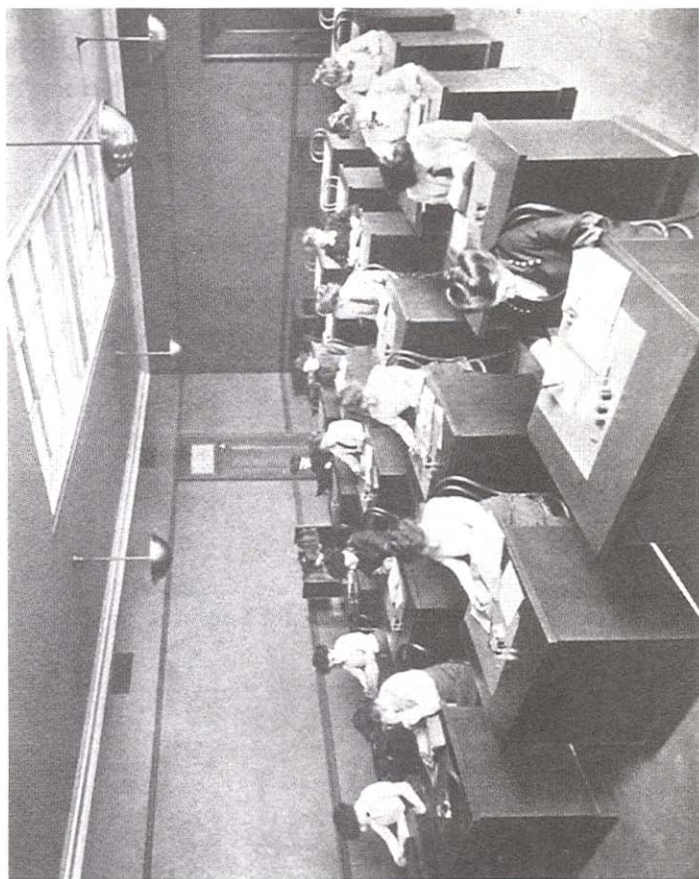


Looking from Delivery Hall into Entrance Hall

The design follows the Renaissance character of the architecture, and is intended to be a sort of obligato, subservient to the order of columns and piers that carry it. The painted heads of St. Louis, for whom the city was named; De Soto, the discoverer of the Mississippi River; Gutenberg, inventor of printing by movable types; and Aldus, the famous Venetian printer of beautiful books, need no further description.

The lunettes above the doors leading from the Hall show cartouches bearing conventionalized flowers: lilies, narcissus, poppies and iris. The central lunettes have youthful supporters, in the manner of the supporters of coats of arms in some Italian compositions.

In general the purpose of the decorative painter has been to complete the plaster surfaces of the interior in spirit with the architect's evident intention—"to play softly, as on an oaten pipe, rather than to bray upon brass or to clash the loud cymbals." He has felt the Library as a place for serenity rather than excitement.



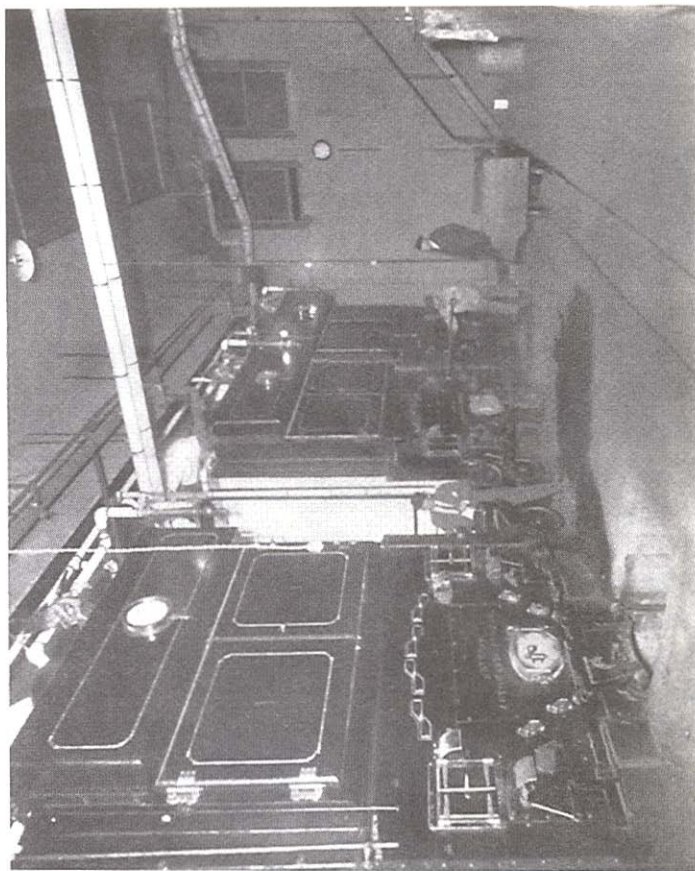
Training Class Room, Showing Indirect Light Fixtures

Light, Heat and Power



THE building is lighted with electricity. In the large rooms on the main floor, especially those with high ornamental ceilings, there are bronze chandeliers of great beauty, and in the reference and periodical rooms table lights are also provided. Where ceilings are low and smooth, as in most places on the ground and upper stories, the indirect system of lighting has been adopted, the lights being disposed in clusters in opaque basins open toward the ceiling. The room is thus lighted entirely by ceiling reflection, no bulb being directly visible to the eyes of persons in the room. The light resembles daylight in being completely diffused throughout the room.

The building is heated directly by hot water circulating through radiators, and indirectly by hot air, which also serves for ventilation. The water for the direct system is heated in the basement in three transmitter-tanks, by steam from boilers passing through coils in the tanks. For the indirect system there are six fan-units which supply hot air to all rooms. The air is taken directly



Boiler Room

from outdoors, passed through preliminary steam coils to temper it, then through a spray of water, which washes it, and then through eliminators, which remove the water from the air, together with ninety-eight per cent of all dirt carried by it. This purified air is then driven by a fan through other steam coils, where it is heated to the necessary temperature and passed on up through the ducts to the various rooms. The ventilating ducts, having their inlets near the floor, allow the foul air to pass out through the roof. The entire system of ventilation, and the incidental hot air heating, is controlled automatically to maintain any desired temperature. For the direct system, which supplements this combined heating and ventilating plant, there are separate radiators in each room, usually under the windows; and in rooms where it is desirable to conceal them from view the shelving has been carried across in front of them, the air entering by a grille in the baseboard and finding its exit into the room again, after being heated, through another grating in the window sill. The books are protected by a thick layer of asbestos around the chamber in which the radiator stands. For the operation of the heating plant, for pumping, for running elevators and book-lifts, and for other purposes for which power may

be required, there are in the building twenty-nine electric motors, furnishing altogether one hundred and twenty-two horse-power, and varying in capacity from twenty down to one and one-half horse-power.



THE main purpose of the building has been kept in mind throughout its planning and construction; namely, that this structure is a library building,—not an art gallery, a museum or a place of amusement; that its purpose should be reflected in its architecture and that its plan should be adapted to its needs. That a library contributes, as nothing else, to the education, culture and refinement of the community, and that in addition to the education obtained from books is that which comes from surroundings of quietude and refined good taste. That a love of beauty is an element of good citizenship and that to inculcate this lesson is a proper part of the general educational function of the library.